

arbitre, God seeth hem alle togider present. Thise thinges thanne, yif they ben referred to the devyne sighte, thanne ben they made necessarie by the condicioun of the devyne knowinge. But certes, yif thilke thinges be considered by himself, they ben absolut of necessitee, and ne foreteten nat ne esen nat of the libertee of hir owne nature. Thanne, certes, withoute doute, alle the thinges shollen ben doon which that God wot biforn that they ben to comen. But som of hem comen and bityden of free arbitre or of free wille, that, albeit so that they bityden, yit algates ne lese they nat hir propre nature in beinge; by the which first, or that they weren ydoon, they hadden power nat to han bitid.

Boece.

WHAT is this to seyn thanne, quod I, that thinges ne ben nat necessarie by hir propre nature, so as they comen in alle maneres in the lyknesse of necessitee by the condicioun of the devyne science?

Philosophie.

THIS is the difference, quod she; that tho thinges that I purposede thee a litel heerbiforn, that is to seyn, the sonne arysinge and the man walkinge, that, therwhyles that thilke thinges been ydoon, they ne mighte nat ben undoon; natheles, thatoon of hem, or it was ydoon, it bihoved by necessitee that it was ydoon, but nat that other. Right so is it here, that the thinges that God hath present, withoute doute they shollen been. But som of hem descendeth of the nature of thinges, as the sonne arysinge; and som descendeth of the power of the doeres, as the man walkinge. Thanne seide I no wrong, that yif these thinges ben referred to the devyne knowinge, thanne ben they necessarie; and yif they ben considered by himself, thanne ben they absolut fro the bond of necessitee. Right so as alle thinges that apereth or sheweth to the wittes, yif thou referre it to resoun, it is universel; and yif thou referre it or loke it to itself, than is it singular. But now, yif thou seyst thus, that yif it be in my power to chaunge my purpos, than shal I voide the purviaunce of God, whan that, peraventure, I shal han chaunged the thinges that he knoweth biforn, thanne shal I answer thee thus. Certes, thou mayst wel chaunge thy purpos; but, for as mochel as the present soothnesse of the devyne purviaunce biholdeth that thou mayst chaunge thy purpos, and whether thou wolt chaunge it or no, & whiderward that thou torne it, thou ne mayst nat eschuen the devyne prescience; right as thou ne mayst nat fleen the sighte of the presente eye, although that thou torne thyself by thy free wil into

dyverse acciouns. But thou mayst seyn ayein: How shal it thanne be? Shal nat the devyne science be chaunged by my disposicioun, whan that I wol o thing now, and now another? And thilke prescience, ne semeth it nat to entrechaunge stoundes of knowinge; as who seith, ne shal it nat seme to us, that the devyne prescience entreachungeth hise dyverse stoundes of knowinge, so that it knowe sumtyme o thing & sumtyme the contrarie of that thing? No, forsothe, quod I.

Philosophie.

FOR the devyne sighte renneth to biforn and seeth alle futures, and clepeth hem ayein, and retorneth hem to the presence of his propre knowinge; ne he ne entrechaungeth nat, so as thou wenest, the stoundes of forknowinge, as now this, now that; but he aydwelinge comth biforn, and embraceth at o strook alle thy mutaciouns. And this presence to comprehend and to seen alle thinges, God ne hath nat taken it of the bitydinge of thinges to come, but of his propre simplicitee. And herby is assolled thilke thing that thou puttest a litel herbiforn, that is to seyn, that it is unworthy thing to seyn, that our futures yeven cause of the science of God. For certes, this strengthe of the devyne science, which that embraceth alle thinges by his presentarie knowinge, establissheth maner to alle thinges, and it ne oweth naught to latter thinges; and sin that these thinges ben thus, that is to seyn, sin that necessitee nis nat in thinges by the devyne prescience, than is therfreedom of arbitre, that dwelleth hool and unwemmed to mortal men. Ne the lawes ne purposen nat wickedly medes and peynes to the willinges of men that ben unbounden and quite of alle necessitee. And God, biholder & forwiter of alle thinges, dwelleth above; and the present eternitee of his sighte renneth alwey with the dyverse qualitee of curedes, despensing & ordeyninge medes to goode men, and torments to wicked men. Ne in ydel ne in veyn ne ben ther nat put in God hope and preyeres, that ne mowen nat ben unspeedful ne withoute effect, whan they ben rightful.

WITHSTOND thanne and eschue thou vyces; worshipec & love thou virtues; areys thy courage to right ful hopes; yilde thou humble preyeres aheigh. Gret necessitee of prowesse & vertu is encharged & commaunded to yow, yif ye nil nat dissimulen; sin that ye worken and doon, that is to seyn, your dedes or your workes, biforn the eye of the Juge that seeth and demeth alle thinges. To whom be glorie and worshipec by infinit tymes.

Amen.

THE BOOK OF THE DUCHESS. THE PROEM.



GRET WONDER, BY THIS LIGHTE,
How that I live, for day ne nighte
I may nat slepe wel nigh noight;
I have so many an ydel thoght
Purely for defaute of slepe,
That, by my trouthe, I take kepe
Of nothing, how hit cometh or goth,
Neme nis nothing leef nor loth.

Al is yliche good to me,
Joye or sorowe, wherso hit be,
for I have feling in nothing,
But, as it were, a mased thing,
Alway in point to falle adoun;
for sory imaginacioun
Is alway hoolly in my minde.

AND wel ye wite, agaynes kinde
Hit were to liven in this wyse;
for nature wolde nat suffyse
To noon erthely creature
Not longe tyme to endure
Withoute slepe, and been in sorwe;
And I ne may, ne night ne morwe,
Slepe; and thus melancolye,
And drede I have for to dye,
Defaute of slepe, and hevynesse
Hath sleyn my spirit of quiknesse,
That I have lost al lustihede.
Suche fantasies ben in myn hede
So I not what is best to do.

BUT men mighte axe me, why so
I may not slepe, and what me is?
But natheles, who aske this
Leseth his asking trewely.
Myselfen can not telle why
The sooth; but trewely, as I gesse,